

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A medical instrument for the treatment of tissue comprising:
a source of light energy;
- 5 a connector removably attachable to said source of light energy;
an optical fiber having a proximal end, connected to said connector, and a distal end
positionable at a site of the treatment, said optical fiber comprising:
a treatment region, a first depth indicating region, and a second depth
indicating region;
- 10 wherein said treatment region includes an active portion and spacer portion;
wherein said first depth indicating region originates with a first primary mark
at its distal end, terminates with a third primary mark at its proximal end, and
includes a second primary mark approximately 5 mm from said first primary
mark.
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2. The medical instrument according to Claim 1, further comprising a main mark
between said first primary mark and said second primary mark.
3. The medical instrument according to Claim 2, further comprising a halfway
20 point mark between said second primary mark and said third primary mark.
4. The medical instrument according to Claim 3, further comprising a first
midway mark between said second primary mark and said halfway point mark; and a
second midway mark between said halfway point mark and said third primary mark.
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5. The medical instrument according to Claim 4, wherein said halfway point
mark is markedly different than said first midway mark, and said halfway point mark
is markedly different than said second midway mark.

6. A medical instrument for the treatment of tissue comprising:
a source of light energy;
a connector removably attachable to said source of light energy;
an optical fiber having a proximal end, connected to said connector, and a distal end
5 positionable at a site of the treatment, said optical fiber comprising a first
depth indicating region;
wherein said first depth indicating region originates with a first primary mark
at its distal end, terminates with a second primary mark at its proximal end,
and comprises a first mark between said first primary mark and said second
10 primary mark, wherein said first mark is markedly different from said first
primary mark, and wherein said first mark is markedly different from said
second primary mark.

7. The medical instrument according to Claim 6, wherein said first primary mark,
15 said second primary mark, and said first mark are around the entire circumference of
said optical fiber.

8. The medical instrument according to Claim 7, further comprising a second
mark between said first primary mark and said first mark; and a third mark between
20 said first mark and said second primary mark.

9. The medical instrument according to Claim 8, wherein said first mark is
markedly different than said second mark, and said first mark is markedly different
than said third point mark.

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10. The medical instrument according to Claim 9, wherein said second mark, and
said third mark are around the entire circumference of said optical fiber.

11. The medical instrument according to Claim 10, wherein said second mark is a plurality of dots, wherein said dots are about equidistantly spaced around the circumference of said optical fiber.

5 12. The medical instrument according to Claim 11, wherein said third mark consists of six dots spaced around the circumference of said optical fiber.

13. The medical instrument according to Claim 12, wherein said first mark consists of six dashes spaced around the circumference of said optical fiber.

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14. A method of gauging the depth of a surgical instrument comprising the steps of:

- A) providing a surgical instrument;
- B) inserting said surgical instrument into tissue;

15 15 C) viewing at least two non-alphanumeric exposed markings on said surgical instrument, wherein said at least two exposed markings are markedly different markings viewed from a plurality of markings on said surgical instrument, wherein said plurality of markings are arranged such that any two markings will uniquely identify a location on said surgical instrument within a depth indicating region of said surgical instrument; and

- D) operating said surgical instrument.

20 15. A surgical instrument comprising:

an elongated portion having a proximal end and a distal end positionable at a site of
use, said elongated portion comprising a first depth indicating region;

25 wherein said first depth indicating region originates with a first primary mark at its distal end, terminates with a second primary mark at its proximal end, and comprises a halfway point mark between said first primary mark and said second primary mark, wherein said first primary mark, said second primary mark, and said halfway point mark are around the entire circumference of said

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elongated portion, wherein said halfway point mark is markedly different than said first primary mark, and said halfway point mark is markedly different than said second primary mark, wherein said first primary mark, said second primary mark, and said halfway mark are not alphanumeric characters.

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16. The medical instrument according to Claim 15, further comprising a first midway mark between said first primary mark and said halfway point mark; and a second midway mark between said halfway point mark and said second primary mark.

5 17. The medical instrument according to Claim 16, wherein said halfway point mark is markedly different than said first midway mark, and said halfway point mark is markedly different than said second midway mark.

10 18. The medical instrument according to Claim 17, wherein said first midway mark, and said second midway mark are around the entire circumference of said elongated portion.

15 19. The medical instrument according to Claim 18, wherein said first midway mark is a plurality of dots, wherein said dots are about equidistantly spaced around the circumference of said elongated portion.

20 20. The medical instrument according to Claim 19, wherein said second midway mark consists of six dots spaced around the circumference of said elongated portion.

20 21. The medical instrument according to Claim 20, wherein said halfway point mark consists of six dashes spaced around the circumference of said elongated portion.

22. A method of use of a surgical instrument comprising the steps of:

A) providing a surgical instrument, said surgical instrument comprising:
an elongated portion having a proximal end and a distal end positionable at a site of use, said elongated portion comprising a first depth indicating region; wherein said first depth indicating region originates with a first primary mark at its distal end, terminates with a second primary mark at its proximal end, and comprises a halfway point mark between said first primary mark and said second primary mark, wherein said first primary mark, said second primary mark, and said halfway point mark are around the entire circumference of said elongated portion, wherein said halfway point mark is markedly different than said first primary mark, and said halfway point mark is markedly different than said second primary mark;

B) inserting said surgical instrument into tissue; and

C) operating said surgical instrument.

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